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REMARKS

ON A

PAMPHLET

INTITLED,

The Traditions of the CLERGY *Destructive of Religion*, &c.

In a LETTER to the AUTHOR.

Tantum semper Potentiam Veritas habuit, ut nullis Machinis, aut cujusquam Hominis ingenio aut Arte subverti potuerit. Et licet in causis nullum Patronum aut Defensorem obtineat, tamen per se ipsa defenditur:
Ben. Collect. Sentent.

Also of your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things to draw away Disciples after them —— Therefore Watch. Acts xx. ver. 30, 31.

LONDON:
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(Price Six-Pence.)

REMARKS
ON A
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INTITLED,

The Traditions of the CLERGY, &c.

SIR,

WHEN I first read your Visitation Sermon, I look'd upon it as the mad Thoughts, and incoherent Whims, of a distemper'd Brain: But when I saw the Reception it met with, amongst Men of loose and debauch'd Principles, I thought that it highly imported me, and every well-meaning Man, to lay open the Poison which you have artfully couch'd in it, under the Colour of Religion and Truth.

It was with this View that I perus'd it again; and this ſecond Peruſal repreſented it in a Light quite different from that I had at firſt ſeen it in. I then perceiv'd your Aim, which was not only to blacken the Conduct and Character of the *Clergy*, but alſo to introduce Diſorder in Government as well as Society: But what Grounds you had to throw out your virulent Aſperſions, and notorious Falſhoods on that Order of Men, we ſhall preſently ſee.

Yet, with the laudable Zeal of *one* embark'd in the nobleſt Cauſe, you have very zealouſly profeſs'd, that the Advancement of Truth, and Extirpation of *Prejudice* and *Error*, were your principal *Motives*. I wiſh you could make this Aſſertion probable, you would not only reſtore yourſelf to the Favour of the more rational Part of Mankind, whom you have juſtly offended by your pernicious Principles and Doctrines, but even do conſiderable Service to your dying *Reputation*.

You ſeem to take it amiſs that you have been branded with ſevere Names, and opprobrious Appellations, for ſpeaking the *Dictates of your Conſcience*. The Dictates of

of your Conſcience muſt be deplorably falſe (as they really are) and widely different from thoſe of the reſt of Mankind, that could draw upon you ſo great and general a Clamour. Our Religion, Thanks be to God! it is not a Piece of *Prieſtcraft*, or profitable *Deluſion*, as you have impiouſly repreſented it, but has always ſtood, and ever will ſtand, the Teſt of Reaſon, and all the Calumnies of its bitterest *Enemies*; Truth ſhines out with additional Luſtre, by being oppos'd; and the greater the Oppoſition is that it meets with, the more glorious it will appear at laſt. This I'm ſure will be the Caſe of our holy Religion, as I'm perſuaded the contrary will be the Event of your *Triumphant Performance*.

You have alſo affirm'd, with a wonderful *Modeſty*, that all you have writ, is the Reſult of an * Impartial Enquiry, and deſign'd for a Foundation to a more *Elaborate Work*. But if the Publick receives no more Advantage from the Publication of *That Elaborate Performance*, than it has yet

* *It ſhould be partial Enquiry, for the Rev. Author both meant and writ ſo, but was alter'd through the Officiouſneſs of the Printer into Impartial.*

receiv'd

receiv'd from this Sixpenny Paper, I would advise you never to let it pass without the Bounds of your *Study*. Consider how you have already expo'd your Reputation by that Specimen of your Parts now under our Examination; and recollect what a bold Attempt you have made to extinguish all Sense of Religion, by your Endeavours to bring the *sacred Order* into the utmost Contempt and Reproach.

If these Considerations are not of Force to prevent its Appearance in the World, I know not what will: But you have display'd so malignant and invenom'd a Mind in this, that 'tis much to be fear'd, *That* other will shew itself to be the genuine Offspring of the same Parent. When Septicism, Ostentation, Ill-Nature, and Error, get Possession of a Man, it is not easy for him to divest himself of them: And as all, or one of these, seems to be the great *Motive that induced* you to pester the World with this *noble Production*, so will the same Motive prevail on you to harrass it with *That*.

Happy had it been for our Church and Religion, that it had never been productive of Men of your loose Principles; Immorality and Vice, Infidelity and Error, with all

all their Train of frightful Consequences, had not advanced upon us in the terrible Manner we find they have. We should have had no Reason to complain, that *the divine Oracles of the most High are levell'd with the weak Opinions of frail Men; or that the Commandments of God are made void by their Traditions.*

But it has been the particular Endeavour of an abandon'd Set of Men, for several Years past, to attack our Holy Religion in as bold and daring a Manner, as ever was done in the darkest Days of Paganism and Error. They have united all their Powers to destroy Christianity; and turn the Mysteries of our Redemption into Banter and Ridicule, in order to substitute in its Place, their own Quibblings and Sophistrys; yet, Thanks be to God! the pious Zeal, and religious Labours of that Ministry whom you have deny'd to be either Orthodox or Apostolical, has frustrated their Hellish Designs, and fortify'd the unsteady Minds of weak and wavering People against all the Poison of their Doctrines.

And you, Sir, have not been wanting to contribute your Part, tho' you have very

zealously

zealouſly made the Sake of Religion the ſole Motive of your Writing. This has always been the Pretence which wicked Men lay hold on, when they engage themſelves even in the blackeſt Attempts, and ever will be. The Prieſts of *Baal* pretended as great Zeal for the Honour of their ſtupid Idol, as the Servant of the *Moſt High* manifeſted a noble one for the Service of the true God, 1 *Kings* xviii. 26. *&c.* And a Zeal equally prepoſterous with that which actuated thoſe idolatrous Prieſts, ſeems to have carry'd you the Lengths you have run. I wiſh the ſame fatal Cataſtrophe which attended them, may not alſo attend you, as you have ſhut your Eyes againſt the divine Splendor of Truth, and repreſented Chriſtianity in a *Light* which none, ſince the Days of *Julian Porphyry*, and *Celſus*, ever ſaw it in, but *You*, and ſome others embark'd in the ſame Cauſe. But let what will be the Event, I am ſure of this, That *Cenſure will purſue you to the Grave, and your Reputation deſcend down to ſucceeding Generations, branded with all the Infamy of Hereſy and Miſcreancy.*

I have now done with your *Rhetorical Preface*, and am juſt upon entering into a Diſquiſition of the main Body of your Work;

Work; but I find it so stuff'd with Contradictions and Inconsistencies, that I know not where I shall begin the Attack: However, as I have follow'd you Step by Step in replying to your *Preface*, I shall also observe the same Method in replying to this. If any Period of it slips my Examination, it is only because I think it unworthy of a Reply.

You give the World a signal Proof of your Prejudice even in the first Page of your Work, and for fear the Generality of Mankind should not perceive it, you continue to illustrate it in the amplest Manner for three Pages further.

Superstition has, indeed, something in it destructive of Religion, but you ought to have explain'd your Meaning of the Word, before you had apply'd it to the Priesthood of the present Times. *You* yourself (notwithstanding all your Pretensions) are not a greater Enemy to Superstition than they have always declared themselves to be.

I defy you, and your Adherents, to show me one Attempt that our Church has made to teach, or propagate, so *dama-*

ble a Delusion : No, it admits of no Tradition that was not believ'd, or receiv'd, when Christianity was in its utmost primitive Splendor. It may be your *Interest*, or rather Folly, to say so, but I am sure it is not the Church's, to teach or avow: It is no more the Practice of the Priesthood, than it is their Duty, to tamper with the *Consciences* of *Men*. They preach no Doctrines that have not bee neither taught, or approv'd of by the Faithful in all Ages, or plainly recorded in Scripture.

Such unworthy Members of that holy Function, as you have manifestly shewn yourself to be, have always been industrious to teach their own ridiculous *Whims*, *and superstitious Fopperies*, *for the Commandments of God*, and propagate 'em with all the Cunning and Art they are capable of, and at last defend 'em with a Spirit of *Contention* directly opposite to that of *Charity*, which their Religion so earnestly enjoins.

But further, you have drawn a very gross Parallel between the profane Practices of a paganish Priesthood, and the religious Institutions of a Christian : You have most maliciously hinted, that the Con-

Consciences of Men are now as much under a *Priestly Domination*, as when Ignorance and Error overspread the World. 'Tis, indeed, true that the Paganism of old *Rome* was excellently well calculated for aggrandizing the Priesthood; and the pompous Ceremonies of their Worship gain'd them an awful Veneration in the Eyes of the Vulgar; but their Religion was nothing else than a Piece of political *Priestcraft*, hatch'd and contriv'd by ambitious, designing Men, for facilitating their Attempts on the Liberties of the People: *Vid. Plutar, Vit. Num. & Jul. Cæs. Liv. Rasm.* &c. But what is this to the present Case? Shall the Priests of the *Most High* be compar'd to those of the *Devil?* Shall these *Blind Watchmen, Greedy Dogs, Shepherds* that understand not, be put upon a Par with those who have an infallible Revelation to direct their Steps?

You have likewise argued in the like ridiculous Manner with relation to *Mahomet*: You most impudently affirm, *That he had slept undistinguish'd amongst the forgotten Ruins of Mortality, and his Religion with him; but for the pretended Visions he saw, and the strange Voices he heard in the Cave of* Hira: Sure there was never any

thing ſaid with a barer Face, nor any thing afferted more contrary to Truth. Had you conſulted your own Reaſon, or been obedient to the Call of Truth, you might have diſcover'd at firſt Sight the Falſity of this, and, indeed, of every thing elſe you have ſo confidently affirm'd; but, like one abandon'd to Prejudice and Paſſion, you were reſolv'd to lay hold on any Argument to ſerve your Purpoſe, however foreign to the Point. The leſs diſcerning Part of Mankind may, by chance, ſwallow your Reaſonings, as they have the Face of Novelty in 'em, (for the World is fond of any thing that is new) but the more Rational and Judicious will reject them with the Contempt they ſo juſtly deſerve.

If you'll be at the Trouble to look over the Life of that Monſter, and obſerve the ſeveral *Arts* and *Stratagems* he uſed to propagate his *Irreligion*, you may ſoon perceive, that nothing leſs contributed to the Eſtabliſhment of it: His pretended *Viſions, and ſtrange Voices*, had like to have fruſtrated all his Meaſures; he was ſoon aware of it, and his intriegueing Brains had as ſoon Recourſe to other Methods.

Men

Men were not at that Time, even in that obſcure and unknown Region of the World, ſo univerſally blinded, as not to ſee into the Villany of his Aims: And 'tis highly probable that the Religion of that *Impoſtor* had never prevailed over one Quarter of the World, if it had not been forced on the Conſciences of Men by *Fire* and *Sword*, *Perſecution* and *Slaughter*.

Theſe were, Sir, the Apoſtles of his Doctrines, and the Founders of his Religion, and always will be the Inſtruments of a Cauſe like his. But can you ſhew Me, that the firſt Preachers of Chriſtianity, or the Miniſters of it in our Church, ſince its Eſtabliſhment according to Apoſtolical Forms, have at any time tamper'd with the Conſciences of Men, or pretended to any Power which the Sanctity of their Function hath not intitled them to? If you can ſhew me this, you can ſhew more than ever Man ſhew'd before you.

The Author of our Holy Religion uſed no Force, imployed no Violence, to compel Men to embrace the Doctrines he taught; he left them at Liberty to receive, or reject 'em; and in Imitation of their in-

fallible

fallible *Guide*, they have uninterruptedly obſerv'd the ſame reaſonable Rule.

If you have known ſome *haughty* and *enthuſiaſtick Members* of our Church, pretend to a Right of reigning over the Conſciences of Men, or inſolently ſtile themſelves *the ſpiritual Princes of the Earth*, what is that to the Purpoſe? Can that reaſonably affect *thoſe moderate and brave Men who prefer the Commandments of God to the Traditions of Men?* Or is it a juſt Pretence for you to ſcandalize the whole Body of the Clergy in the licentious Manner you have done?

Can the moſt diſintereſted Man upon Earth read this Paragraph of your Paper, without feeling in his Breaſt a juſt Indignation, and generous Contempt of your *Perſon* and *Performance?* You have very juſtly obſerv'd (and 'tis, perhaps, the moſt pertinent Obſervation you have made) that our pure and reform'd Church yet wants Purity and Reformation; it does, indeed, want both, and ever will, whilſt it has ſuch impure and unreform'd Wretches belonging to it, who, either through Ignorance, or Malice, endeavour to pervert thoſe committed to their Charge, and obtrude

trude the damnable Conceits of their own Brains, for the ſalutary Doctrines of Chriſt. Can they ſay with St. *Paul, That they are free from the Blood of all Men?* Or can they conceive that they are *not to anſwer for the Souls of thoſe that are undone thro' their Default?*

But to crown all, you have moſt cavallierly ſtruck at the Eſſentials of Religion, and, as one determin'd on the Deſtruction of it Root and Branch, have levell'd all your Artillery to invallidate both the Miſſion and *Authority* of the Prieſthood: You very fairly promiſe to ſhew wherein the Clergy of this Nation have err'd, and wherein they *have oppos'd their vain Traditions to the Divine Word of God*; yet you are ſo far from proving of either, that you have given the moſt demonſtrable Proofs of the Veracity of all you pretend to confute: For after you have ſtated the Controverſy, even in your own Way, you very *candidly* acknowledge, That *there muſt be ſome to expound the Word of God as long as there is a Church and a Religion; and that 'tis neceſſary there ſhould be ſome Form of Government, ſome kind of Diſcipline in the Church, for without it there could be no ſuch Thing as Unity, which is eſſential thereto.*

But

But, not satisfied with this Proof of all we contend for, you go a Step further, and declare the Necessity of some kind of *Mission* for the Sake of Order; for, as you say, *how shall they preach, except they be sent?* How inconsistent you are with yourself in this, let every reasonable Man judge! In short, you think it evident, that this Institution is *Apostolical*, and yet, with an unparallel'd Bigotry, deny that 'tis either necessary or essential to the Being of a Church; surely your Memory must be surprizingly short and treacherous, or your Judgment lamentably weak and narrow. These Slips and Contradictions bring into my Mind a Sentence, which I can't help applying to you at present, and which, if you had remember'd, had done your Reputation a considerable Service, and that is,

Conveniat nulli qui secum dissidit ipse.

But to return: If the Episcopal Oeconomy be a laudable and necessary Institution, 'tis evident, that it could not expire with the Apostles, as the Commission which our Saviour gave them after his *Resurrection*, expressly contains, not only an

Authority

Authority to ordain others, but alſo a Power to transfer that Commiſſion to their Succeſſors; and 'tis ſtill more evident, that 'twas not perſonal to the Apoſtles from the Promiſe of our Saviour to be with them in the Execution of their *Function* even until the End of Time, *Matth.* xxviii. 20. 'Tis true, you ſay, that this Promiſe implies no extraordinary Aſſiſtances to be given *to the Miniſters of the Goſpel*; but the *Ipſe dixit* of a Man abandon'd to Prejudice and Error is not at all concluſive: You have impiouſly miſapply'd this Paſſage of Scripture to accompliſh your Ends, in Oppoſition to the Dictates of your own Conſcience, and the Judgment of the beſt and moſt judicious Interpreters upon it: Yet 'twas in Conſequence of this Promiſe that those divine Men ordain'd *Biſhops* in all the Churches they planted; St. *James* at *Jeruſalem*; *Epaproditus* at *Philippi*; *Titus* at *Crete*; and *Timothy* at *Epheſus*. This is the Truth of the Matter, and to teach or believe otherwiſe, is only worthy of the *T——l's* and *B——m's* of the Age.

Beſides, you have more than once acknowledg'd, that Epiſcopacy was an Ordinance the beſt that could be invented at the Time of its Inſtitution: 'Tis a very

 fair

fair Confeſſion from ſo declar'd an Enemy; and ſince you are oblig'd to confeſs it, I may, *without any Abſurdity*, conclude, That if it was good at any, it muſt neceſſarily be good at all Times: Neither is it (as you argue) inconſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God, that he hath not given us a particular Revelation of his Will, with relation to the Perpetuity of this Ordinance; 'tis enough that the Apoſtles inſtituted it, the Primitive Church rigorouſly obſerv'd it, and that it was the only Government known in the Church for the Space of 1500 Years; and were there no other Argument to inforce the Veracity of the Point now in Diſpute, this one would be enough to ſatisfy Me, and every rational Man beſides.

The next Argument your Infatuation, or Deſpair, has made you lay hold on to prove that Epiſcopacy was not, at its Eſtabliſhment, intended to be a perpetual Ordinance, is drawn from the preſent State of the Church of *Scotland*, and the reform'd Churches abroad; but this, Sir, will be of no Force to ſtrengthen your Argument; it proves, on the contrary, the Weakneſs of it, as it has drawn you into a *World* of Difficulties and Contradictions, which

which are always the Effects of a bad Cause. The avow'd Advocates of Presbyterial Government have unanimously writ in Justification of Episcopacy, and commended it as an Institution excellent in its Nature, noble in its Ends, and the best concerted Scheme, both for Order and Government, that could possibly be thought of. *Calvin* expressly saith, *Nullo non Anathemale dignos fateor, si qui erunt qui non eam* (Hierarchiam) *reverenter summaque obedientia observent.* * But to give you still further Proofs of the Veneration those Reform'd Churches have for the Episcopal Hierarchy, I shall quote you a very memorable Passage from *Theodore Beza*, and the great *Melancthon*, which, I'm hopeful, will silence your groundless Cavils, and unreasonable Prejudices against the purest Church that has been since the Time of the Apostles, and the most religious Ministers and Members that any Period of Time, since that, has produced. *Beza*'s Words are, *Sed & fidos Pastores cur non omni Reverentia prosequamur? Nedum ut, quod falsissime nobis aliqui objiciunt cuiquam us-*

* *Lib de Necessit. reform. Eccles.* p. 69.

piam Ecclesiæ sequendum nostrum peculiare Exemplum præscribamus, imperitissimorum illorum similes qui nihil nisi quod ipsi agunt rectum putant. Resp. ad Sarin. cap. 21. And the Great *Melancthon*, with a true Christian Concern, bursts out into this pathetical Expression: *Utinam possim Administrationem restituere Episcoporum, Video enim qualem sumus habituri Ecccleſiam, dissoluta* πολιτεια *Ecclesiastica*, &c. *Hist. Confes.* August. p. 305.

You must also have a very mean Opinion of Religion, and the Founders of it, when you can imagine, that they left it in a Condition as unsettled as the Tempers of Men: Could our Blessed Saviour lay down his Life to restore Mankind to that happy State, which they had forfeited by the Lapse of the first Parents? Could he, I say, purchase to himself a Church worth no less a Price than that of his Blood, and leave her to the Direction of Inconsistency and Chance? Those Holy Men who instituted this Form of Government, would certainly have given us some Intimations of this memorable Revolution, and peremptorily declar'd, that what they had then appointed, was not to be of a lasting

lasting Necessity, but only adapted to the Circumstances of the Times.

But the contrary is evidently clear, as neither they, nor their immediate Successors, have left us the least Ground to expect any Change in that Government which they had universally settled, even amidst an infinite Variety of * Temporal Polices; shew me (if you can) one Passage, or even Syllable, in any Author of Antiquity, that can countenance this Temporary Institution you so strenuously contend for, and I'll promise you *one Proselyte* the very next Moment.

Upon the same Suppositions you may argue against the eternal Validity of Scripture, and affirm, that all that the Apostles writ, was no longer Binding than

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* *This is a strong Argument that this Institution was not intended as a Temporary Expedient, and proves, beyond all Contradiction, the Absurdity of the Reverend Gentleman's Remarks; for 'tis impossible to conceive, that the Apostles shou'd not have varied from this Institution amongst Governments so different from each other as were* Monarchies *absolute, limited,* Aristocracies, Oligarchies, *and* Democracies, *and under which there must be as great a Diversity of Tempers as we can possibly imagine. That this is Matter of Fact, we have as great Authority for, as for any other Point in History.*

Tempers

Tempers and Times made it neceſſary; an infallible Spirit (according to your own Confeſſion) guided them in writing thoſe Sacred Pages, and if ſo, it muſt neceſſarily have directed 'em in eſtabliſhing the Polity of a Church. If you can have the *Front* to deny this, you muſt of Conſequence deny that.

You have, beſides, the unanimous Authority of the Fathers againſt you in this Point; and 'tis no Wonder you ſhould be ſuſpicious of an Attack from that Quarter. Theſe Holy and Religious Men always ſpeak of Epiſcopacy as of an Inſtitution of perpetual Obligation; not as it was an Inſtitution under which they liv'd themſelves, (as you imagine) but as it was eſſentially neceſſary to the Being of a Church. † Our Bleſſed Saviour inſtituted it, the Apoſtles practiſed it, and derived it to their Succeſſors, not as a Temporary Expedient, but as a Poſition and perpetual Form of Eccleſiaſtical Government.

If our Saviour then inſtituted this Form of Government for a Perpetuity, (as 'tis

† *See St.* Cyprian, *Part* 2. *Letter* 33.

evident

evident he did) by what humane Authority can it be repeal'd? The Obligation of a Divine Command is only dissolvable by a Divine Countermand; and until that same Authority which at first gave it Being, shall please to declare it void, every unprejudiced Man ought, and will, rest satisfy'd under it. You have, indeed, given the World the strongest Proof of a daring Presumption, in taking upon you to declare an Institution of God alterable, before He hath Himself thought proper to declare it so: You may, with the same *reasonable Pretence*, disannul all the other Institutions of Christianity; and the World sees what a Step you have gone towards that, but what the Event may be, Heaven only knows.

To have done then with this Head: Can any Man in his Senses suppose that those Good and Pious Men who succeeded the Apostles, who in Defence of the Doctrines they taught, laid down their Lives, should conspire to cheat and impose on the whole Christian World in so gross and scandalous a Manner? But, say You; *Why might not they be byass'd by the same pleasing Temptations of Honour and Grandeur that we are?* This may possibly

pass

paſs amongſt thoſe who know no better; but there is none who has ſo much as look'd into Antiquity, or heard of the Characters of thoſe venerable Men, that will not preſently ſee that they minded nothing leſs, nor contemn'd any thing more. Grandeur and Pomp were not at all the Objects of their Purſuit, they had more glorious and noble Ends in View; and, indeed, that Sanctity of Life, that Purity of Manners, that Fidelity, Diſintereſtedneſs and Charity which animated all their Actions, makes your Accuſation as impious as abſurd.

If the *Fathers* had confederated to make Epiſcopacy what the Author of it never intended it ſhould be, that is, of perpetual Duration, is it poſſible that ſo great a Number of Men, for ſo many Centuries of Years, could thus inviolably have preſerv'd the Secret? Should not ſome Author of Antiquity have charg'd 'em with the Fraud, and made the World ring with the Wickedneſs of their Attempt; but ſo far from it, that there is nothing in which Antiquity is more ſilent.

I wiſh, Sir, that the Duties of my Employment permitted Me to prove the Point

Point now in Dispute from the Writings of those Holy Men whom you have so scandalously abus'd, I should not doubt to give you a total Discomfiture; but this is a Work that would require more Labour than I can now bestow upon it, and too great an Honour done to your carping Performance, tho' the least Part of that I ought to do in Justification of our Religion and Government.

The Inference you draw from the Perpetuity of this Institution, is much of a Piece with the rest of your Doctrines; here you have display'd your Rage and Resentment, and vented your Malignity in a Manner hardly to be parallel'd: If the Result of this Perpetuity was so terrible and destructive as you have represented it to be, it had not only been the Interest, but even the Happiness of Mankind, to have it exterminated to the World long before now. The Apostles, *you may be sure*, never design'd to overturn the Foundation of Civil Governments; they have, on the contrary, even consecrated the Authority of the Civil Power, by the strictest Injunctions, to be subject *to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's Sake*, 1 Pet. ii. 13. 1 Tim.

xi. 1, 2. So that it can't imply an intire Independence of the State, nor that the Government can't exact any legal Security for the Behaviour of the Clergy, but what they themselves are pleased to give.

'Tis true, Christianity was at first independent of the Civil Power, as it subsisted itself for the Space of 300 Years in Opposition to it; and every Attempt from the Civil Power, to curb the Growth of Religion, was actual Tyranny and Oppression: But to make this Independence still more evident, 'tis very observable, that the first Teachers and Preachers of Christianity, were regardless of any Command from the *Authorities* then in *Being*, that prohibited them the Exercise of that Power wherewith they were invested; namely, a Power of abolishing the ancient Rites of receiv'd Paganism, and of substituting in their Place the Doctrines of Christ: They knew that their Authority was from *Him*, from whom all Authority is deriv'd; and they were not deter'd from the just Exercise of it, by all the Threatenings and Severities that could possibly be invented, to frustrate those Ends for which they were commissioned. But

But no sooner was Christianity receiv'd, and made the particular Care of the Legislative Authority, than the Case was alter'd; it then became necessarily dependent on the Civil Power, as it was the most capable of protecting it from the daring Insults of wicked and turbulent Men: I can't, for my Life, penetrate into the Ends you had in View, when you drew *those* monstrous Conclusions from the Perpetuity of Episcopal Ordination; Conclusions so wild and extravagant, that 'tis hardly possible to suppose that you believe them yourself to be true. Has our Church at any Time (since it rid itself of the Spirit of Popery) disclaim'd its Dependence on the Civil Power, or refus'd the Government the most legal Securities for the Behaviour of its Members? Are they not, on the contrary, restrain'd from *Secret Treason*, and *Open Rebellion*, by the most solemn and sacred Engagements that Words can form.

Tho' the Legislature is by our Church acknowledg'd to be in *all Causes, and over all Persons, Ecclesiastical and Civil, supreme Governor*, it does not at all infringe the Privileges of the Church, for

the Reasons already advanc'd ; it does effectually prevent that Anarchy and Confusion that must necessarily ensue from the *Being* of two *supreme Governments* in the same Nation : Your *Ignorance* of the Nature of *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil Societies*, and the Difference which is naturally between them, has involv'd you in all the Errors and Inconsistencies you have fallen into, in your Disquisition of this Point ; if your Ignorance has not, your Rancour or Malice must, which will make your Insinuations still more inexcusable.

I shall here finish my Remarks on your *most excellent Production*, not because you have left me no more Room to remark on, but because I think the remaining Part of it unworthy my Regard. Your Argumentations on authoritative Absolution and Excommunication, are childish and frivolous, and I would willingly save your Reputation in this, even at the Hazard of my own : I know that I have given you a Handle to throw out your Railleries, but remember, that I do hereby enter my *Caveat* against them.

There

There is only *one Thing* that I think neceſſary to take Notice of, and that is That the frequent Inſinuations and Re-proaches you ſo baſely and inconſide-rately throw out upon the *Sacred Or-der*, is evidently done with a View to compliment the *Impiety* (I can give it no ſmoother Term) of ſome Lay-Patron, from whoſe *Generoſity and Munificence* you are to receive *Great Things*. If there be any Foundation of Colour or Truth in what I have lately heard, We inſiſt, and every diſcerning Man muſt ſee, that there could be no other Motive or Reaſon to induce you to write in the ſcandalous Manner you have done.

The Work of the *Miniſtry* is, indeed, a great and important Charge, but you have moſt impiouſly proſtituted the Ho-nour and Dignity of it, and reflected an indelible Scorn and Reproach upon your own Character and Reputation. I heartily pity your Condition, and think you may juſtly cry out with the Mourn-ing Prophet, *Oh! that my Head were Waters, aud mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night*

to attone for the Evils I have done, or at least, endeavoured to do. Jer. ix. 1. And with these Words I can't do better than conclude.

I am, &c.

FINIS.

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